

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O P 301815Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6858

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T RABAT 5252

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SP, SS

SUBJECT: SPANISH HOPES FOR U.S. INTERVENTION WITH KING HASSAN TO  
PREVENT SAHARA MARCH

REF: MADRID 7536, 7537, 7538

1. WE NOTE FROM REFTELS THAT CERTAIN HIGHLY PLACED SPANISH  
OFFICIALS ARE TELLING US THAT USG SHOULD DO SOMETHING TO PREVENT  
HASSAN'S SAHARA MARCH, APPARENTLY IN THE BELIEF WE COULD TURN IT  
OFF AT WILL, IF ONLY WE COULD BE PERSUADED THAT THE ISSUE WAS IM-  
PORTANT

ENOUGH TO MERIT THE EFFORT. A RELATED THEME IS THAT KING IS  
BLUFFING DANGEROUSLY AND WILL NOT REALLY BE ABLE TO CARRY OFF  
THE MARCH.

2. FROM RABAT PERSPECTIVE, WE WOULD JUDGE HASSAN WILL NOT BE  
DETERRED FROM GOING AHEAD WITH HIS PLANS BY COUNSELS FROM US,  
OR FOR THAT MATTER FROM THE UN OR OTHER OUTSIDERS. KING STRIKES  
US NOT ONLY AS BEING VERY MUCH IN EARNEST BUT ALSO AS QUITE  
LIKELY TO FEEL COMPELLED TO LAUNCH SAHARA MARCH ACROSS HIS  
SOUTHERN BORDER AT A FAIRLY EARLY DATE, EVEN IF HE IS STILL UNCERTAIN

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REGARDING OUTCOME. WHERE THERE APPEARS TO REMAIN SOME

FLEXIBILITY, IN OUR VIEW, IS IN THE FORM AND DIMENSIONS OF THE MARCH; MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HOW MADRID PLAYS ITS CARDS IN CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS.

3. CENTRAL FACT HERE IS THAT MARCH HAS CRYSTALLIZED LATENT MOROCCAN NATIONALISM AND GENERATED EXTRAORDINARY MASS EXCITEMENT AND SUPPORT. AT COUNTRY TEAM MEETING THIS MORNING WE ADDED UP THE INPUTS FROM ALL MISSION ELEMENTS AND THE RESULTANT PROFILE WAS OF A NATION THAT IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMS HAS CAST ASIDE ITS DOUBTS, COMMITTED ITS FATE TO ALLAH, AND EMBARKED ON A COURSE FROM WHICH IT WILL NOT BE DEFLECTED. A NATIONAL MOOD LIKE THIS IS HARD TO DEFINE ACCURATELY BUT IS NONETHELESS SOMETHING THAT POSES VERY STRICT CONSTRAINTS ON THE FREEDOM OF ACTION OF A POLITICALLY SENSITIVE LEADER WHO WANTS TO SURVIVE.

4. FOR THE MOMENT, KING IS RIDING THE CREST OF THE WAVE. OPTIMISM PREVAILS, FED BY THE LOCAL MEDIA, THAT SUCCESS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. WELL-ADVERTISED SUPPORT FROM OTHER ARAB STATES, INCLUDING ARRIVAL OF DELEGATIONS TO TAKE PART IN MARCH, CONTRIBUTES TO THE EUPHORIA. OF COURSE IT IS TACTICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO KING TO EXUDE CONFIDENCE AT THIS STAGE, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE HE ACTUALLY BELIEVES MORE OF THE SELF-SERVING SELF-CONFIDENCE HIS MINIONS ARE SPOUTING THAN THE OBJECTIVE FACTS WARRANT: WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW.

5. MARCH, HAVING ALREADY GAINED CONSIDERABLE MOMENTUM, HAS BECOME AN INDEPENDENT FACT IN ITSELF. MARCHERS IN SOUTH TO DATE NUMBER IN THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE, DESPITE INEVITABLE REPORTS OF LOGISTICAL MISHAPS. ASIDE FROM PATRIOTIC MOTIVES, MANY OF MARCHERS, WHO BY AND LARGE DRAWN FROM POORER, YOUNGER ELEMENTS, HAVE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION. THEIR MARCHING CARDS ARE EXPECTED TO GIVE THEM CONCRETE BENEFITS SUCH AS THOSE ACCORDED EARLIER RESISTANCE FIGHTERS. IN ANY CASE, ONCE FULL CONTINGENT OF MARCHERS IS ON SAHARA BORDER, PRESSURES FOR MOVEMENT WILL INEVITABLY BECOME INTENSE, AND SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF CROWD CONTROL COULD DEVELOP IF NOTHING MUCH HAPPENS OVER PROTRACTED PERIOD.

6. A MODIFIED, SCALED-DOWN MARCH, WITH ITS START DELAYED FOR A SHORT TIME, WOULD SEEM TO REMAIN A POSSIBILITY IF SIGNIFICANT,

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VISIBLE GAINS ARE ACHIEVED ON THE NEGOTIATING FRONT WITH SPAIN. MARCH COULD THEN PRESUMABLY BE PRESENTED TO MOROCCAN PUBLIC AS A "VICTORY CELEBRATION", TAKING PLACE MAINLY IN VICINITY OF BORDER, WITH PERHAPS ONLY SMALL SYMBOLIC GROUP PROCEEDING TO EL-AYOUN. ON OTHER HAND, NEGOTIATING STALEMATE COULD WELL INTENSIFY PRESSURES ON KING TO PUSH AHEAD WITH FULL-SCALE MARCH. UNLESS NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN HAVE COMPLETELY BROKEN DOWN IN MEANTIME, MOROCCANS WILL NO DOUBT BE LOOKING TO

SPANISH MILITARY FORCES IN SAHARA TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT THEMSELVES  
AND WILL PROBABLY ARGUE THAT THESE FORCES SHOULD ALSO HELP PROTECT  
MARCHERS FROM ANY OUTSIDE THREATS OF VIOLENCE.

7. TO SUM UP, WE BELIEVE IT BEST FOR U.S. TO STAY ON SIDELINES  
VIS-A-VIS MARCH, AND TO GIVE GOS AND OTHERS NO GROUNDS TO BELIEVE  
WE MAY BECOME MORE ACTIVE. FOR US TO AGREE TO PRESS MOROCCANS  
TO DESIST WOULD LIKELY BE WORSE THAN INEFFECTIVE IN THAT IT COULD  
DEFLECT HARD-LINERS AMONG SPANISH LEADERSHIP FROM FACING UP TO  
THE REAL PROBLEM, WHICH IS THAT HASSAN HAS UNLEASHED A FORCE THAT  
HE CANNOT TURN OFF, AND THEREBY CREATED A SITUATION WHERE SPAIN  
MUST MAKE WAY OR THERE WILL BE A COLLISION.  
COON

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